



**Commonwealth of Kentucky  
Personnel Cabinet**

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**Secretary Roberts, task force members hear from state employees**  
*Frankfort meetings first of 12 to gain input on merit system*

**FRANKFORT, Ky.** – Personnel Cabinet Secretary Erwin Roberts and members of the Blue Ribbon Task Force on Kentucky’s Merit System received input from state employees at the first of 12 “Employee Merit Recommendation Meetings” scheduled across the state. The first of two meetings held today at the Frankfort Convention Center drew more than 800 state employees.

Governor Ernie Fletcher announced the formation of the Merit Task Force in July. The bi-partisan committee has compiled a list of 27 preliminary recommendations and several amendments. Among consideration by the task force is whether violation of the KRS 18A should be punishable through criminal or administrative penalties.

“The average time it takes the Personnel Board to hear and rule on a complaint is 90 days,” said Secretary Roberts. “Addressing merit system violations through the affirmative process will mean swifter justice and better remedy for those wronged in any potential violation of the merit system.”

State employees who attended today’s meeting received information about the recommendations under consideration including:

- Classification & Compensation Committee recommendations:
  - Seek a reduction in the number of classifications of between 40 and 60 percent. Currently there are 1, 657 classifications and 708 of them have more than five employees. There are 200 inactive classifications.
  - Facilitate implementation of a 40-hour workweek. Compensate employees for additional time.
- Selection Committee recommendations:
  - Maintain an employee promotion system that provides career path opportunities through families of job classes based on merit, experience, excellent performance and evaluation. This provides for the capability for

internal promotions without requiring external competition. This change will enhance the ability of a classified employee to promote within the existing system.

- Maintain civil service protections against political influence in the selection of qualified state classified employees; redefine mission statement (KRS 18A.010(1)) to include strong and clear directive; clarify prohibitions against political discrimination within KRS 18A.140(1).
- Employee Relations Committee recommendations
  - Implement a drug-testing program for Executive branch employees to include post offer/pre-employment drug testing, reasonable suspicion drug/alcohol testing, and random drug/alcohol testing.
  - Increase the amount of paid military leave to a maximum of 21 calendar days from the current maximum of 15 calendar days. Allow any unused days in a federal fiscal year to be carried over to the following year. Enhance current benefits to equal those benefits enjoyed by civil service employees in the Federal Government.
  - Update the State Affirmative Action Plan
- Governance Committee recommendations
  - Acts of discrimination outlined in KRS 18A.140 are subject to civil penalties including fines and prohibition of future civil service when the board determines circumstances warrant referral to the Attorney General for enforcement of these civil penalties.

A complete list of recommendations and amendments under consideration by the full Task Force can be found at <http://personnel.ky.gov/stemp/meritsysbrtf/>

Secretary Roberts will travel across the Commonwealth in the coming days to gain additional input from state employees. The series of meetings will wrap up October 31 in Paducah and Louisville.

Input and suggestions from state employees will be part of the Task Force's final report to Governor Fletcher. A vote is expected in early November.

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